

# Learning From Serious Case Reviews

## Child V

Child V was found unresponsive during a visit to see her Mother, half siblings and maternal grandparents. Child V died the following day due to a cardiac arrest likely to be caused by a natural but undetermined cause. Child V and her older sibling were subject to Child Protection Plans at the time.

Themes that emerged from the Serious Case Review in to Child V;

- ◆ Quality and effectiveness of assessments and decision making
- ◆ Professional understanding of parental mental health, domestic abuse, substance misuse and the potential impact of these factors on Child V and siblings
- ◆ Parental mental health
- ◆ Parental substance misuse and domestic abuse
- ◆ Parenting capacity
- ◆ Recognition of and response to neglect
- ◆ Developing and sustaining a clear multi-agency response to neglect
- ◆ Recognising challenging behaviour as means of communication
- ◆ The voice of the child
- ◆ Multi-agency cooperation and escalation
- ◆ Professional understanding of the lived experience of the children

Agencies Involved; Buckinghamshire Children's Social Care, Buckinghamshire Healthcare Trust, CCG/GP, Children's Centre, Thames Valley Police, One Recovery Bucks, Primary School Education and Nursery

## Baby N

Baby N died as a result of overlay in December 2018. The family lived in unsuitable living conditions on a caravan site (they were not Romany travellers). School had referred family to Early Help.

Themes that emerged from the Serious Case Review in to Baby N:

- ◆ The importance of understanding the family history
- ◆ Assessing the holistic needs of children
- ◆ Cross-border issues: information sharing when family moving between counties and correct LA's receiving referrals when family living close to county borders
- ◆ Assessing risks to staff whilst meeting the needs of those living in disadvantaged areas
- ◆ Responding to urgent and emergency housing needs of children living in neglectful circumstances

Agencies involved: Thames Valley Police, Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue, Buckinghamshire Children's Social Care, Southampton Children's Social Care, Northamptonshire Early Help, BHT Health Visiting, Oxfordshire Midwifery, Southampton Schools and GPs, Primary Education, Pre-Schools, Aylesbury Vale District Council

Links to the Child V and Baby N reports;

[Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews - Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership](#)

## Areas of Good Practice

Child V:

- ★ Agencies were aware of the challenges experienced by CSC at the time considered by the Review. There were some examples of professionals undertaking work that was over and above their responsibility in response to the needs of the Child V and family

Baby N:

- ★ Education Services went above and beyond with the support provided to the family. Primary school worked closely with Secondary school and Secondary school exceeded class size to accommodate sibling of Baby N
- ★ Children's Services in Northamptonshire shared their assessment with Children's Services in Southampton
- ★ Health Services followed good practice guidance by contacting Southampton to gather further information about the children
- ★ There is evidence that the Housing Triage Officer that managed the family's contact with AVDC identified that this was a complex case that would require immediate action

## Recommendations

Pre-Birth Procedure and policies to be reviewed and amended if necessary

Reminders regarding challenge of partners when decisions are not agreed with, and the importance of the escalation procedures within agencies

Quality of assessments and ensuring they include multi-agency contributions

Pathways between Children's Services and Adults' Services when there are issues regarding parenting capacity, substance abuse, mental health issues, learning disabilities/difficulties

Identify barriers to the effective use of neglect tools, ensure current tools are fit for purpose and agree a common framework for assessing neglect

Multi-agency cooperation, importance of information sharing and nurturing positive professional relationships

Importance of Safeguarding Supervision and regular safeguarding case discussion within every agency

Practitioners should be supported regarding unconscious bias and professional curiosity via training and within safeguarding supervision

The voice of the child, and their lived experience, should remain key in all assessments, plans and decisions made

### PRACTICE TIPS

Take the time to reflect in supervision when you are working with families who have crossed borders or are receiving services from different areas, information can be lost or misunderstood

Use of escalation processes can offer appropriate challenge and reflection on internal and inter-agency decisions